

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

S E C R E T USUN 5701

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR UN PDIP VS SZ UN

SUBJ: PRG LIAISON OFFICE IN GENEVA

REF: STATE 264789

1. IN AMBASSADOR SCALI'S ABSENCE AT WASHINGTON MEETINGS, I CALLED ON SYG WALDHEIM THIS MORNING AND MADE STRONG CASE AS SET FORTH REFTEL. WALDHIEM ACCEPTED, AT LEAST IMPLICITLY, OUR ARGUMENTATION BUT INSISTENTLY MAINTAINED, ALBEIT SOMEWHAT LAMELY AT TIMES, HE COULD NOT AFFORD TO UNDO WHAT HAS BEEN DONE. THROUGHOUT CONVERSATION WHICH LASTED MORE THAN ONE HOUR, I REPEATEDLY STRESSED USG OPPOSITION TO ESTABLISHMENT OF PRG LIAISON OFFICE IN GENEVA.

2. NOTING HE HAD BEEN SUBJECT TO CONTINUOUS AND STRONG PRESSURES FROM "MANY SIDES" (HE REFERRED OBLIQUELY TO CHINA AMONG OTHERS) EVER SINCE PRG REQUEST FOR LIAISON OFFICE IN GENEVA ORIGINALLY RECEIVED IN JANUARY 1973, AND THAT ONLY US. HAD EXPRESSED OPPOSITION, WALDHIEM SAID HE HAD STALLED AS LONG AS HE COULD. HE WAS SIMPLY BOWING TO INEVITABLE AND WAS RESTRICTING PRG STATUS TO OFFICE SOLELY FOR HUMANITARIAN PURPOSES.

3. EVEN NOW, HE SAID, HE HAD FINALLY ACTED ONLY AFTER

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RAISING MATTER WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER THREE TIMES OVER

PERIOD OF TWO MONTHS--IN WASHINGTON, NEW YORK AND ROME. USYG GUYER, PRESENT DURING MOST OF CONVERSATION AT SYG'S INVITATION, REPEATEDLY ASSERTED WITHOUT DEMURRER FROM WALDHIEM THAT SYG HAD IN GOOD FAITH INTERPRETED SECRETARY'S POSITION IN ROME AS TACIT ACCEPTANCE OF SYG'S NECESSITY TO ACT. I CHALLENGED SYG NUMEROUS TIMES AND WENT OVER SECRETARY'S LANGUAGE PER REFTTEL, BUT HE WOULD NOT BE PINNED DOWN. WALDHEIM SAID HE REGRETTED "THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN ANY MISUNDERSTANDING."

4. WALDHEIM DID NOT DENY MAY REITERATED AND EMPHATIC ARGUMENT THAT PRG REQUEST WAS TRANSPARENT PLOY FOR POLITICAL STATUS RATHER THAN BONA FIDE REQUIREMENT FOR IAFOR LIAISON WITH HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES OF UN. HOWEVER, HE ARGUED THAT IT IS NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE FOR SYG TO DENY A REQUEST MADE ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS. HE AVOIDED COMMENT ON MY INSISTENCE THAT TWO YEARS OF PRG EXPERINECE IN DEALING WITH UN HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, DEMONSTRATED THERE WAS NO ACTUAL NEED FOR LIAISON OFFICE IN GENEVA.

5. WALDHIEM AND GUYER AT FIRST ARGUED THAT MATTER WAS STRICTLY ONE FOR SWISS GOVERNMENT DISPOSITION AND THAT WALDHEIM HAD MERELY FORWARDED PRG REQUEST "WITHOUT OBJECTION." I REPLIED THAT ANY DIPLOMAT WOULD INTERPRET THAT FORMULATION AS AN IMPLIED APPROVAL AND THAT SWISS GOVERNMENT HAD TOLD US THEY HAD DONE EXACTLY THAT.

6. WHILE AT LONG LAST TACITLY ACCEPTING MY ARGUMENT THAT UN COVERING LETTER TO SWISS WAS IN FACT DE FACTO ACQUIESCENCE IN PRG REQUEST, WALDHEIM AND GUYER ARGUED THAT THEY WOULD BE "REVERSING THEMSELVES" IF THEY RE-INTERPRETED PHRASE "NO OBJECTIONS" THE PHRASE MEANT NEITHER APPROVAL NOR DISAPPROVAL, THEY CONTENTED ILLOGICALLY.

7. IT WAS CLEAR FROM DISCUSSION THAT WALDHIEM IS DUG IN AND, SUPPORTED BY EVEN MORE DETERMINED GUYER, WILL NOT MAKE NEGATIVE APPROACH TO SWISS, MUCH LESS GO SO FAR AS TO REQUEST THAT GOS TAKE NO STEPS TO SANCTION ESTABLISHMENT OF RPG OFFICE IN GENEVA. I INSISTED HE SHOULD CLARIFY MATTER WITH SWISS AND MAKE CLEAR TO LATTER, EITHER ON UN
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INITIATIVE OR IN EVENT SWISS INQUIRY, THAT UN IN TRANSMITTING PRG REQUEST HAD MEANT TO IMPLY NEITHER APPROVAL NOR DISAPPROVAL. SYG WAS PLAINLY UNCOMFORTABLE BUT MADE NO COMMITMENT; HE FINALLY CONCLUDED CONVERSATION BY SAYING WE WOULD HAVE TO CONTINUE TO DISCUSS IT.

8. I SPOKE PRIVATELY WITH SYG AS MEETING BROKE UP TO STRESS ONCE AGAIN IMPORTANCE OF HIS MAKING CLEAR TO SWISS THAT UN'S

TRANSMITTAL OF PRG REQUEST DID NOT CONSTITUTE APPROVAL.
I LEFT HIM IN NO DOUBT THAT USG CONSIDERS THIS A MOST
SERIOUS ISSUE AND THAT OUR OPPOSITION TO PRG LIAISON
OFFICE IN GENEVA, NO MATTER FOR WHAT PURPOSE IT IS ANNOUNCED,
HAS NOT CHANGED.

9. COMMENT: IN VIEW GOS COMMENTS RE THEIR LACK OF
DESIRE FOR PRG LIAISON OFFICE ON SWISS TERRITORY (BERN TEL 4541),
IT WOULD PERHAPS BE HELPFUL IF EMBASSY BERN WOULD PASS
ON TO GOS WALDHIEMS STATEMENT THAT UN NOTE INTENDED NEITHER
APPROVAL NOR DISAPPROVAL OF PRG REQUEST. THIS MIGHT INSPIRE
SWISS TO MAKE FURTHER INQUIRY OF UN AND FORCE SYG AND HIS
STAFF TO FACE UP TO ISSUE. WE SHOULD KEEP THE PRESSURE ON
WALDHEIM.
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